

Plainfield Council on Aging

December 2024 Newsletter

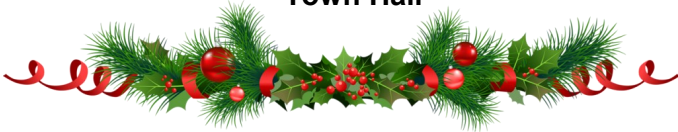


Plainfield Council on Aging
Town Offices, 304 Main St.
Plainfield, MA 01070

Polly Ryan, Coordinator
413-212-1581
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us

Holiday Luncheon

Wednesday, December 11th at Noon
Town Hall



On the menu is Roast Beef, roasted potatoes, green bean casserole, carrot casserole, salad, and dessert. Other desserts are welcome. A nurse from the Health Department in Northampton, Kelly Hughes, will also conduct a blood pressure clinic.

A holiday present from your COA...**Would you like to see the Metropolitan Opera perform The Magic Flute?** It's showing at local cinemas (Hadley and Pittsfield) **Saturday December 7th at 1 pm**. We'll provide the tickets, but you will have to get yourself to the theater. The Met made history in December 2006 when it presented its first Live in HD transmission to cinemas worldwide. Julie Taymor's whimsical production of The Magic Flute features a winning ensemble—including tenor Matthew Polenzani, baritone Nathan Gunn, and bass René Pape. Tickets can be reserved with Polly depending on availability at **413-212-1581** or email **pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us** (the sooner you call, the more guaranteed you are of a seat).

Join us for a holiday movie matinee at the Town Hall on December 14th at 2pm. The movie will be determined at the November holiday luncheon. If you are on the email list to receive the COA newsletter, a notice will be sent to you about what was chosen. Holiday treats and popcorn will also be provided. (The technical issues we experienced at the last movie matinee in November will be resolved and a prompt start time is promised!)

Interested in learning Tai Chi? There has been a date change. Richard Larson, a fellow senior and dancer from Goshen, will lead a class in

the 8 Ways and principles of Tai Chi at the Cummington Community House on **Wednesdays at 2 pm**. These 8 simple repeating movements, involving the principles of Tai Chi, develop strength, balance, relaxation and peace of mind as a moving meditation. Richard studied Tai Chi form and the 8 Ways at the NY School of Tai Chi Chuan. This class is ongoing and free. You may join at any time.

Additional Healthy Bones & Balance exercise classes will be held at the Cummington Community House and lead by Polly! She will lead classes **every Tuesday at 3pm and every Friday at 9:30am**. Feel free to join anytime. The classes are free and ongoing. Classes are also scheduled at the same location on Mondays and Thursday at 9:30.

Our SHINE/Connector expert, Deb Hollingsworth, has retired! It will be hard to fill her shoes! Caroline Solan is replacing her and can answer all your Medicare/Advantage plan health insurance questions (open enrollment ends December 7th). She is available in person on Wednesdays at Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES, 320 Riverside Drive in Florence). You can also call HVES at **413-586-2000** to leave her a message or book an appointment. The most expedited way to reach her would be to send her an email at **csolan@lifepathma.org**.

The Connector Program is run through the Northern Hilltown COA consortium. This program helps guide people in finding services beyond health insurance. If you are in need of any services contact the COA Director at the Chesterfield Council on Aging, **413-296-4007** or email **coa@townofchesterfieldma.com**

If you have questions about MassHealth call Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center **413-238-5511** or email her at **bthomas@hchcweb.org**

Got Food? There are several programs for receiving food and/or prepared meals delivered to your home regardless of your income. Check in with Polly to find one that fits your needs. And, if you wish to help a neighbor by volunteering to pick up food for them, please check in with Polly as well.

Grab and go hot meals are available for Plainfield's 60 and over residents at the Cummington Community House. They can be picked up every Tuesday between noon and 12:30. To register or order for the first time, contact Chrisoula: croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov or 634-2262. A suggested donation of \$3 per meal supports Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

Funding that has provided us with FREE Technical support, street to house internet hookup, and devices to access the internet **is ending February 1, 2025**. Please visit <https://northernhilltownscoas.org/> for more information on how to take advantage of these services from now through January 2025.

The Plainfield Library hosts drop-in tech support every 3rd Thursday of each month from 5 pm to 8 pm. Tech Savvy Plainfield resident, Lee Locke-Hardy, has graciously volunteered her time for this. Thank you, Lee!

The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) has a list of volunteers willing to provide rides to local vendors and medical appointments. Please call **413-634-0170** a few days ahead to schedule something. Leave a message with your contact information and details of your transportation needs.

Fresh Covid test kits (expire in spring of 2025) are available. Arrange to get some from Shirley by calling **413-446-9608**. She can also access durable medical equipment for you if needed. If she is unavailable call Polly at **413-212-1581** or Jeannie at **413-522-1687**. Please consider doing Covid home testing before attending COA events to curb any spread.



Happy Birthday!

Eric Light, Donald Shelton, Phillip Lococo, Paul Dileo, Cathy Shugg, Barbara Westwood, Grace Gardner, Steven Lamontagne, David Crowell, Alexandria Nelson, Patricia Beckwith, Pauline Hunt, John Burrell, Howard Bronstein, Robert Sadlowski, Donald Stewart, Charles King, Susan Pearson, Sally Silverberg, Donald Walters, Philip Allesio, Aurore Bush



The Plainfield Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to help build important programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Plainfield Council on Aging. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.
(Please write your check to The Town of Plainfield and mail to Plainfield COA, 304 Main St. Plainfield, MA 01070)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Plainfield Council on Aging

Bad News, Good News

Do you want the Bad news first? Then we will end with the Good, being positive as we are.

The Bad – scams are on the rise in frequency, diversity and impact. Around 50% of people of all ages are likely to lose money to a scam, sometimes hundreds of dollars. The types of scams, e.g., grandparent, social media hack, QR codes, etc., make our exposure and danger so much more likely than before. As for impact, in addition to including how awful we feel about being scammed, the total monetary cost per year in the US might be 10 billion dollars or more. That's dollars with a B.

The Good – more agencies and organizations are paying attention and marshaling resources! I've compiled a list of sources for avoiding and reporting scams.

AARP. The Association of Retired Persons keeps up with types of scams and issues alerts along with other educational materials. There is a Watchdog Alerts newsletter. Go to their scam web page: www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/

BBB. Better Business Bureau prepares topical scam alerts, highlighting current and most active scams. Mind-boggling. To sign up for their newsletter, go to www.bbb.org/us/news/scams, then scroll to the bottom and click on "Sign up for scam alerts".

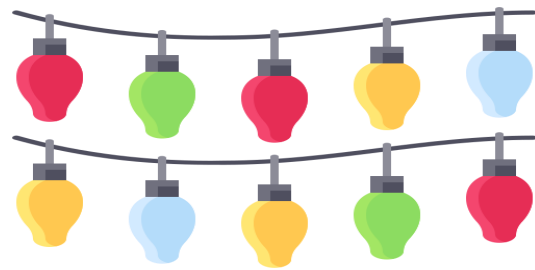
BBC. The British Broadcasting Corporation posts a page called Be Scam Safe with a really full set of scam videos and articles. Type into your browser "Be Scam Safe" to connect.

CFPB. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau at www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/fraud/ talks about understanding scams, knowing your rights, and how-to guides.

DA. The Northwestern District Attorney's office advocates for all residents, especially elders, focusing on education and prevention of consumer scams and elder exploitation. Go to www.northwesternda.org/prevention and click on Consumer Protection or call **413-586-9225**.

VA. The Veteran's Administration has a new service with information, reporting, and assistance on scams for veterans, service members, and their families. Visit www.VSAFE.gov, or call 1-833-388-7233.

Yours in safety,
Jean O'Neil
TRIAD Committee member
jeanoneilmass@gmail.com, 413-268-2228



Seniors Aware of Fire Education

The holiday season is upon us and most of these holiday observances involve electric lights and candles. Here are a few things you can do to keep your celebration bright and safe.

Senior 
SAFE

For indoor lights and decorations:

- Buy lights and electric decorations that are listed safe by an approved testing service.
- Check for and replace any lighting that has frayed wires, broken plugs, sockets or switches.
- Never overload outlets.
- Use no more than three (3) strings of lights on a single extension cord.
- Remember to turn off the tree lights and other electric decorations before going to bed.
- Consider using energy efficient LED lights that stay cool.
- Never use lit candles in the tree or near live or other flammable decorations.
- Keep lit candles at least a foot (12 inches) from flammable items.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended.

For outdoor lights and decorations:

- Only use electric decorations that are rated for outdoor use.
- Plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Use electric connection protectors.
- Anchor outdoor lights and decorations with insulated holders or hooks.

Keep the holidays bright SAFElly!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the MA Dept. of Fire Services.

Tech. Help and Training for December



We have more people to help you with your tech needs and requests. Our long period of low staffing is at an end. With more hands on deck we are hoping our final three months will have much higher efficiency and shorter response times.

More Tech Support Available by appointment

Receive technology help by email, phone, drop-in, or by appointment: coaTechHelp@gmail.com, phone or text msg **413-296-5080**.

Being delivered now: Internet Hotspots

Need affordable internet access? Have you already requested affordable internet? We have a solution that may work for you. Hotspots are small cellular devices you can use to access internet. They work like WIFI without cable or fiber service. Hotspots work in most areas in the hilltowns. If you are interested in learning more about how these devices could benefit you, please contact us by phone or email. If you requested affordable internet and were not contacted in November, please reach out to us again. Calls to **413-296-5080** are now returned and email to coatechhelp@gmail.com is also a great way to reach us.

Devices for you: PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets

Ky Martus continues distributing devices. Please remind us if you requested one and are still waiting. We have more PC laptops, refurbished Chromebooks and iPad and Android tablets. If you need or are waiting for a device to connect to the internet, have something so old it is not working effectively, or need a different type of device, please contact us. Email coatechconnect@gmail.com, leave message at **413-296-5080**, or use online request form on our website, www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Drop in Centers: All are Welcome at Any Location! (no appointment needed)

- Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd.
Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00
Three Fridays, 11:30-1:30 (12/6, 12/13 & 12/27)
- Cummington Community House, 33 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 2nd Weds. 10-12 (12/11)
- Goshen Free Public Library, 42 Main St.
Drop-in tech support, 3rd Thurs. 12-2 (12/19)

- Plainfield Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St.
Drop-In tech support, 3rd Thurs. 5:30-7:30pm (12/19)
- Westhampton: to be scheduled. Please contact us for details, coatechhelp@gmail.com or call **413-296-5080** for day/time.
- Williamsburg
Meekins Library Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 12/10 from 10 to Noon
Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support
2nd Tuesday 12/10 from 10 to Noon
- Worthington: tech support at COA office.
Call COA for date & time: 413-238-5962.

Tech Training:

Must pre-register for training no later than one week before the scheduled training date. All classes held at the Chesterfield Community Center, 400 Main Rd, lower level. To register, email coaTechTrainer@gmail.com, call or text **413-296-5080**, or sign up through the website www.northernhilltownscoas.org

Computer Classes:

Beginner's Windows Laptop Class will restart on Thursdays on December 12, 19 and January 9, 16 from 1:00 - 2:30.

Intermediate Windows Laptop Class starts, over six Wednesdays, 10:30-Noon. December 4, 11, 18 and Jan 8, 15, 22, 10:30-Noon.

Tech Workshops:

- 12/6, 10:30-11:30 Computer Maintenance
- 12/9, 1 - 2:30 Organizing, Storing, & Moving Digital Photos (ONLINE CLASS)
- 12/13, 10:30-11:30 Windows Accessibility
- 12/17, 1- 2:30 Android phones
- 1/10, 10:30 - 11:30 Misinformation
- 1/15, 12- 1:00 Self Learning
- 1/24, 10:30 -11:30 Google Suite
- 1/29, 10- 11:30 iPhones
- 1/29, 6 - 7:00 pm Learn & Watch:
YouTube, Libby, Kanopy



On the Road Again...

2025 Trips



Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat **before** mailing any payments to determine availability: 413-296-4291, francine.frenier@gmail.com. Mailing address: 11 Stage Rd., Williamsburg, MA 01096.

*Day Trip late April TBD. **Encore Casino.*** Boston Harbor casino trip. Lunch on your own, options available on site.

*Day Trip May TBD. **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum & Maggiano's Little Italy.*** Enjoy a delicious family-style lunch at Maggiano's. Tour three floors of galleries at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum on your own or with a guide. Price TBD.

*Day Trip June TBD. **Winnepesaukee Railroad.*** Enjoy a delicious turkey dinner, prepared by Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, aboard the train while touring the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Price TBD.

*Multi Day Trip June 22-26. **Montreal & Ottawa. Passports required.*** Visit the Biodome, Notre Dame Basilica, Montreal's Underground City, Parliament Hill, Cruise on the St. Lawrence River. Price \$1,052. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by March 26, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

*Day Trip July TBD. **FDR Homestead & Library and Hudson River Cruise.*** Start your day with a scenic cruise on the Hudson River. Enjoy lunch at Mahoney's Irish Pub & Steakhouse (TBD.) Tour the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first Presidential Library. Price TBD.

*Day Trip August 3. Triple A affiliates, **Boston Red Sox vs Philadelphia Phillies** at Polar Park, Worcester, MA. A pre-game tour of Polar Park and a ball-park-fare buffet for our group are included. Cost \$90.00. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above.*

*Day Trip Sept. TBD. **The BIG E,*** an annual favorite, with free entertainment at The Court of Honor Stage.

*Day Trip Sept 5-Oct 26 TBD. **A Chorus Line.*** 50th Anniversary Production on stage at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Lunch at The Gelston House. More details to come. Price TBD. Wed.Thurs.Sun

*Multi Day Trip October 12-18. **Biltmore Estate & Smoky Mountains, Asheville, NC.*** Seven days, six nights. Visit the Biltmore Estate, the St. Lawrence Basilica, historic Gatlinburg, TN & Asheville, NC. Guided tour of the Smoky Mountains

National Park. Price \$1,099. Discount of \$25 if paid in full by July 18, 2025. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above. **As of December 2024, Diamond Tours is expecting this trip to go, despite the hurricane damage. Please stay tuned.**

*Day Trip Nov-Dec. **A Holiday Event in Waltham, MA.*** Reagle Music Theater Players beloved Christmas extravaganza--100 performers, live orchestra, dancers, living nativity, and yuletide tunes. Pre-show lunch at The Chateau Restaurant. Price TBD. Sundays.

Good News for December

By Deborah Hollingworth

The Good News this month is a reminder that we have a resource called The Connector which can work for you if you have questions about benefits, resources, and services. When your circumstances change, and you could use some help, but don't know what's available or where to start, the Connector can help you "connect" with the resources you need.

This help is available to the seven hilltowns of Plainfield, Cummington, Worthington, Goshen, Chesterfield, Williamsburg and Westhampton through a grant from Highland Valley. We have helped people figure out housing options, determine if folks are eligible for benefits like fuel assistance, SNAP, Circuit Breaker property tax rebates, and if folks qualify for subsidies on their health insurance.

Often it's brainstorming on how to survive a change in medical conditions, or shrinking finances and increasing household overhead/bills. What to do when life throws us a curve ball, or when we might be worried about outliving our savings/investments.

The Connector can help you understand what's available when you're being discharged from a nursing home, or whether you might be eligible for MassHealth and whether MassHealth might pay family caregivers for the help they provide.

There's help out there, but unless you know the eligibility requirements... unless you know how the 'system' works... unless you know what's available... you can't get it, if you don't know about it.

The Connector is here to help you get those resources, over a phone call or a home visit to help with an application. Whatever works for your situation. It's a no cost resource, funded through Highland Valley.

To get help, call your COA and they will get you Connected!

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Plainfield Town Offices
304 Main St.
Plainfield, MA 01070**

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Newsletter Designer
Kristen Estelle

The Goshen Council on Aging invites you to a three part discussion group based on the book *Let's Talk About Death Over Dinner* by Michael Hebb.

* **January 7, 2025, 4-5pm**

Introduction and receive a copy of the book.

* **February 18, 2025, 4-6:30pm**

Catered dinner and a prompted discussion facilitated by Stacey Mackowiak, End of Life Doula.

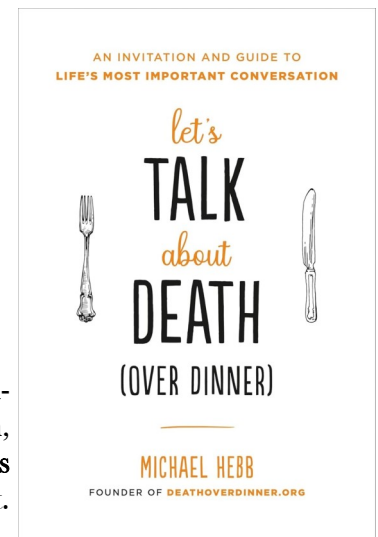
* **February 25, 2025, 4-5pm**

Follow up conversation (optional).

This important and engaging program is free and limited to 15 participants; older adults from all Hilltowns are welcome. Please contact Kerry Normandin, Goshen COA Director, by 1/3 to sign up: 413-268-9354 or coa@goshen-ma.us All three parts will take place in the John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St. Goshen, MA. Funded by a grant from the MCOA.

"...encourages people to pull up a chair, break bread, and really talk about the one thing we all have in common."

"...transform your difficult conversations into an opportunity of celebration and meaning, changing not only the way we die, but also the way we live."



Massachusetts
Councils On Aging